Tatterhood

Issue No.4

strange flesh

by Kerry Lindeque

Recently I've been on a kick of consuming media all about bodies: what we do with them after we die, how we create images of them, and how they are controlled and policed. So if you're interested in all things corporeal like me, come dive into my recent picks of films, books, and tv shows all about bodies, bodies, bodies...

Film: Anatomy of a Portrait *(2026)*

Created by a Columbian film student to huamise the donated bodies used in his university's anatomy lab, I got to see this short film at its premiere at DocFest 2026. The film follows an old woman's decision to donate her body to the medical school, as well as her commissioning a portrait from a young artist to celebrate her decision. The cinematography gently weaves together how we create portraits and how cadavers are dissected for medical learning, using black and white to soften the carnality of pickled body parts and dissected rib cages. The old woman at the centre of the film is a breathe of fresh air - speaking with curiosity about how her body will be dissected and with little fear about having to rely on kin to carry out her wishes after death. Much has been said on the importance of respecting the wishes of the dead - the Irish Giant and the repatriation of aborigine bodies are vital case studies. But I think this film adds an interesting caveat to this discourse on bodily agency: the freedom in letting of fear and control. The young artist does so when she poses nude for life drawing to be perceived and painted at the whim of strangers. The old woman does so when she calmly accepts that what happens to her earthily vessel after death is beyond her control.

TV Show: America's Sweethearts: Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders (2024-2026)

This Netflix show about the highs and lows of the elite cheerleading squad for the Dallas Cowsboys football team is disgustingly addictive and thoroughly revealing of the of societal construction of the perfect American woman. You oscilate between

being amazed by their athleticism and sparkly costumes to being horrified by the way their bodies are surveilled and policed. The cheerleaders are colloquially known as 'America's Sweethearts' and thus the standards set for them are punishingly high. Their dancing is constanly filmed and nitpicked online, whilst their coaches maintain strict rules: hair must be flowing at all times during routines, they must "look well-proportioned in dancewear", and must maintain squeaky clean images in their private lives. As fun as the show is, the squad can't help but feel like a reflection of what the perfect female body looks in fascist USA: blonde, thin, young, and white.

Book: What She Wants: Women Artists Look at Men *edited by Naomi Salaman (1994)*

Since the release of acclaimed film Portrait of a Lady on Fire, there has been much really interesting discourse on the female gaze: the feminist cultural theory of how art, media, and bodies are represented through a female perspective, as opposed to the male perspective that dominates arts and media. Some of it however I have found a bit generalising and non-critical: the idea that when a women creates images of bodies it is inherently non-exploitative and leery. 'What She Wants' complicates that. A book I unearthed in a charity shop, it's the book accompanying a 1994 touring exhibition, curated by Naomi Salaman. The exhibtion, put simply, flips on its head the age old art tradition of male artists painting and photographing the female nude, by putting together an exhibition of female photographers making art of the male nude. The accompanying book of the photos and essays were a crazy charity shop find! Significantly it shows the full range of the female gaze: some photos are shocking and gross, some romantic and gentle - but all are a brilliant bodily exploration of men by women.

keir starmer is in my cupboard - a ghost story

by Robyn Lindeque

I haven't lived in the UK for 9 months and I've started to totally lose touch with my former home. I sat in a bar with the locals screaming at the screen as France scored in the world cup, but the blue light of my phone pinged me at 2am to tell me that England had won a match. In fact, it took me 3 whole days to realise that Keir Starmer had resigned as prime minister. My sister mentioned it casually on the phone and I had to tell her that I had no idea.

In many ways, I feel spiritually aligned with Keir. When I first moved to the island Petit-Ilur, I was buoyant with hope and excitement. Finally, I would leave behind the shackles of dreary old England and frolic along the wild coast line, meeting beautiful and interesting people while completing my PhD research into the majestic Morbihan Gull. But sadly, these past months haven't quite been as fulfilling as the emails to my parents have made them out to be.

The shared house I live in is rambling and creaky, but not in a charming Enid Blyton kind of way. Its not built for the incessant storms that batter the black sand beaches. We are 7 occupants, all of varying ages and nationalities, and we live in a constant acrimonious state of unclean bathrooms, mud traipsing up and down the hall and awkward meals cooked in parallel and eaten in silence.

My PhD funding has slowly been cut back and back until I barely have enough Euros to put a drop of fuel into my battered red Fiat that I drive up and down the crumbling cliff-side roads. With the windows rolled down, I yank the handbrake and whip out my binoculars at the slightest sound of a distant shriek. So far, i've not seen a single Morbihan Gull, only it's more common cousin, the Harnic Gull. And who gives a toss about the Harnic Gull. I am so desperate to see my illusive muse, that my dreams are a patchwork of milky beaks and midnight blue feathers and canary yellow anisodactyl.

It's another Friday night and two Danish girls have finished fumigating the kitchen with their odorous fish dinner and are spritzing their last touch of perfume before trudging through the rain to the local bar to flirt with young fishermen.

"Ah Cleo, are you sure you won't come?" Bente lilts.

"Ja Cleo! Don't spend another friday night watching bird YouTube videos till 3am, please." Inger chimes in.

"Thanks girls, really. But i have so much PhD work to catch up on."

Bente and Inger glance at each other quickly. We all know that's a lie. They wrestle on their huge anoraks and rubber boots, before the front door comes crashing open with a burst of gale force winds. Undaunted by the weather conditions, they plunge into the gathering storm, the haunting notes of their native tongue disappearing into the night.

I push my potatoes around my plate until they have gone cold as I click video link after video link for the next 2 hours: "OMG! Did I See the NEAR EXTINCT Morbihan Gull???" (Spoiler alert: no, they didn't). I've had enough for the night. Stacking plates on an already full sink that has certainly discovered a new strain of antibiotics, I'm about to mount the stairs to make the everest climb to my attic room when I hear something.

"Hem hem"

I whip around. Is it Maureen lurking in the corner? The American mother of 6 who is so passive aggressive, the acid on her tongue burns a hole in the floor. She loathes when I don't do the dishes. No, the kitchen is empty. The single glaze window is rattling as the force 9 gusts whip around the house and I can hear the drip drip drip of the tap that will never shut off. I'm imagining it.

"Hem hem… good evening"

Oh my god, I'm not imagining it, there is someone here, speaking to me. In the great debate of fight, flight and freeze, I fall into the latter category. My fingers are white knuckled on the door frame and my heart is beating so loudly I can barely hear the sea roaring outside.

"So sorry, didn't mean to startle you. Could you please open the cupboard door and give me a little air? Thank you so much."

Where is it coming from? why do I know that voice? My eyes dart around the kitchen. Paint peeling off the ceiling: check. Patterned tiles designed to give you an epileptic fit: check.

Pots and pans cupboard with the door hanging off its hinges: check. Wait, no, not check, there is something sticking out the cupboard door and curling around it… fingers, wiggling at me cheerily.

I'm compelled by some mystical force and I slowly approach the cupboard. With my be-slippered foot, I gently nudge the cupboard door open and it swings wide with a creak like a long sigh. Exactly where the cast iron pans, the cheap wok and the broken sieve should be is a mess of tangled, knotted pale limbs and pin stripe fabric. There are some spectacles poking out amongst the knot of flesh. I can see through each translucent limb to the one behind. It's like someone has taken a sleeping bag and shoved it into its casing without doing the proper rolling method. Except it's not a sleeping bag.

"Oh my god, it's Keir Starmer" I howl.

"Oh ah, right, no sorry, it is in fact Sir Keir Starmer." the blob stammers.

The face of my former prime minister, through which I can see a shiny black shoe, is half pressed against the wall of the cupboard and half facing me. It scrunches into a contorted grimace. An attempt at a smile? An awkward, Kermit the Frog chuckle is emitted. I collapse onto my knees so I am at face level with him. I can barely comprehend what is happening, so instead I resort to my British instinct: I'm exceedingly polite.

"Um… Sir Keir, you don't look very comfortable? Can I help you?"

"Oh don't you worry about me, I'm used to being in complicated positions before, if you know what I mean."

I can't help it, I snap: "Oh right, like your stance on the genocide in Palestine?"

"Ah right, ok well, that's not very fair-"

"You know what, I don't care. Is this real? Did I eat a bad mushroom? What are you doing here?"

"Wes, yes, well since I've resigned, I decided it was time for a little me time. and I thought, what better place than this wonderful island of um… the island of…"

"Petit-Ilur"

"Right! Exactly, Petit-Ilur, excellent excellent. Ah, well I was shooting for Biarritz but I suppose this will do just nicely, won't it?"

"You're a long way from Biarritz. and to be honest, it's not very relaxing here. We're sort of in the middle of a freak summer storm. Anyway, you don't deserve to relax, you were a bit rubbish at being Prime Minister."

What I can see of his bottom lip starts to tremble and his chin starts to wobble. In fact the whole cupboard to wobble, then the kitchen, the spoons rattling off the counter top and smacking the floor, the bare bulb begins to swing back and forth like a pendulum and the framed photos of ancient fisherman vibrate so much i think they're about to launch off the wall. He's throwing a ghostly tantrum.

“Shit! Fuck, I mean, no no mate don’t cry.”

His eyes are scrunched tight as fat tears roll down his diaphanous cheeks and pour out the cupboard in waves, soaking into my slippers.

“You did some good stuff! Like um… the Renters Rights Bill! Yeah! That was great, Thank you Sir Keir!”

The minor earthquake stops. His eyes slowly opens and he gives a big sniff and stretches his grey lips into a contorted smile.

“You’re right! I did do that and it was excellent, well done me-”

There is crash as the front door bursts open and a cacophony of giggles shatters what I’m sure was a very well prepared speech. Bente and Inger are ushering 2 strapping young fisherman inside, each with handlebar moustaches that are certainly covering for the fact that they are barely scraping 20.

“Welcome to our house hehe, it’s super old and for sure haunted - oh my days Cleo are you ok?” Inger drops her sodden coat on the floor and scampers down the corridor towards me. “You’re so pale! Did you see a ghost or something?”

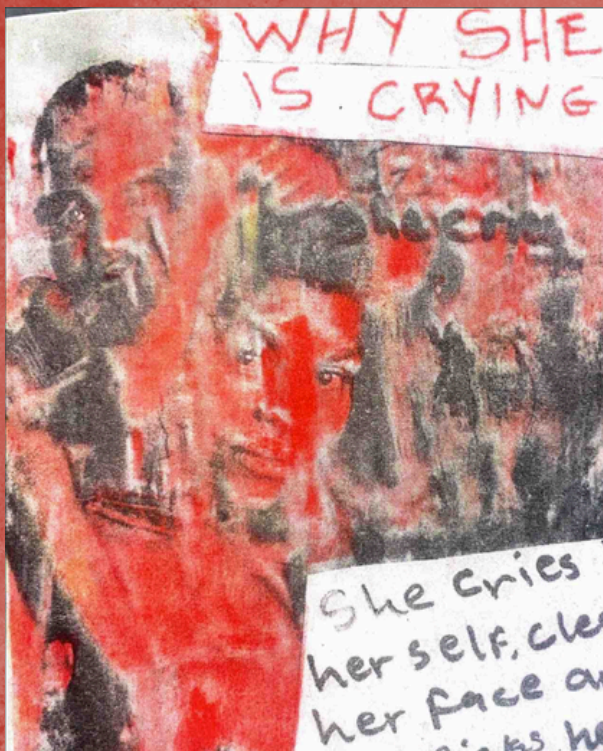
Only garbled sounds exit my mouth and I turn to the cupboard with a trembling finger, he’s gone. The pots and pans are sitting on their usual shelf and there is no ectoplasmic residue, no stray suit thread, nothing. Dropping to my knees, I shove my head into the cupboard and then the next and then the next, tossing tupperware across the floor. I can’t have made him up, I can’t have imagined this.

Inger is begging me to calm down and yanking at my arm, trying to drag me out of the kitchen. I can hear Bente frantically whispering to the 2 fisherman, who have almost started to put their coats back on, no promise of a Nordic shag is worth this freakish encounter.

I feel myself collapse into Inger’s strong grip and allow myself to be dragged up the stairs, my vision swimming and the mahogany stairs becoming one long brown snake up and up and up.

“I’ll get her a glass of water and a sleeping pill!” Bente hollers,

“Get well soon Cleo, I’m sure you’ve just caught some sort of bird flu - ugh there’s loads of water on the floor, where did this come from, do we have a leak?”



Images produced by
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in order for me to write poetry
that isn't political
must listen to the birds
and in order to hear the birds
the warplanes must be silent.

a trio of spray paint and paper based art pieces, based on original designs by Robyn Lindeque, slogans of migration liberation and a poem by Marwan Makhoul.

Bad Tattoo

An audio story by Kerry Lindeque.
Scan to listen.

I'm a cyborg, baby!

by Kerry Lindeque

Donna Haraway's seminal 1984 essay 'The Cyborg Manifesto' was an early call to intersectional feminism through the intriguing theoretical (and literal!) concept of cyborgs - a blurring of the line between human and animal and human and machine. Haraway uses this cyborg to reject both white feminism and rigid identity politics, calling for coalition and solidarity across blurry margins. She also warns us of both the danger and positive potential of the increasing blend of man and machine. In the age of drones and Meta surveillance glasses, The Cyborg Manifesto' was pretty damn ahead of its time.

So it's time to find out... are you a cyborg?

How addicted to your phone are you?
a. I go on my phone a couple hours a day
b. Phone? The mycelium network is my phone
c. My phone is my precious DON'T TAKE HER AWAY

What's you go to dance move in the club?
a. The macarena
b. Getting on my hands and knees and howling like a wolf
c. The robot

Haraway says most cyborgs are the 'illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism' - but luckily 'illegitimate offspring are often exceedingly unfaithful to their origins'. So how much did you rebel against your parents as a teen?
a. No, I was a good kid
b. Yes, I was always running off into the woods
c. Yes, I was always sneaking out to get drunk on brake fluid - I mean vodka!

Choose your ideal cinema snack:
a. Popcorn
b. Grass - healthy and nutritious
c. Microchips - so crunchy yum yum

Mostly As
Human

Ugh boring...

Mostly Bs
Animal Cyborg

Woof woof woof?

Mostly Cs
Machine Cyborg

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